THE

RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

IV. December 30, 1938 Tebet 8, 5699 No. 17

Editorials

IS THE ARAB TERROR A NATIONAL REVOLT?

CONGRESS SEEKS THE CAUSE OF DEPRESSION

NEITHER ISOLATIONISM NOR COLLECTIVE SECURITY

The Organized Jewish Community and Institutional Autonomy

By LOUIS KRAFT

Is United Jewish Action Possible?

By BERNARD G. RICHARDS

Published by

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM

15 West 86th Street, New York, N. Y.

Public discussion is the basis of democracy

THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DISCUSSES ALL THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES CONFRONTING THE JEWISH PEOPLE. BUT THE EDITORS CLAIM NEITHER INFALLIBILITY NOR SUPERLATIVE WISDOM. WE WANT TO SET OUR READERS THINKING, AND WE SHALL BE GLAD TO PUBLISH THEIR THOUGHT ON OUR PUBLIC PROBLEMS.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

TELL IT BRIEFLY AND SUCCINCTLY.

WE WANT TO GIVE OUR OTHER READERS THE BENEFIT OF YOUR THOUGHT.

What shall be done about Jewish refugees?

What shall be done about Palestine?

What shall be done about Jewish life in America?

SUBSCRIPTION BLANK

THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST,
15 West 86th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen: Please send me THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST for.....year(s).
I enclose check for $.....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

Subscription: $1.00 a year.
Foreign, $1.25.

THE
RECONSTRUCTIONIST

Vol. IV. December 30, 1938 Tebet 8, 5699 No. 17

EDITORIAL BOARD
MORDECAI M. KAPLAN, Founder
Managing Editors
IRA EISENSTEIN, EUGENE KOHN
Associate Editors
Michael Alper — Samuel Dinin
Ben Zion Bokser — Abraham G. Duker
Israel S. Chipkin — Samuel C. Kohs
Mortimer J. Cohen — Milton Steinberg
Hannah Machlowitz, Secretary

The RECONSTRUCTIONIST is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues starting in October, by The Society for the Advancement of Judaism, 15 West 86th St., New York, N. Y. Subscription $1.00 a year; foreign $1.25; individual copy 10 cents. Entered as second class matter January 9, 1935, at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.
The editorials represent the opinions of the editors only.
200

EDITORIALS

Is The Arab Terror A National Revolt?

THE cry of "handmaiden of British Imperialism" has been leveled time and again against the Zionist movement. We are not in this place concerned with the exoneration of a movement which has been very much alive in different forms for eighteen centuries before the British Empire embarked on its Mediterranean venture. We are bothered more by a different aspect of the same problem, a case which is being taken for granted by most liberal and especially radical circles, namely, that the Arab terrorists are actually waging a battle against imperialism, and for national self-determination.

While so much ado is being made about the Zionist "imperialist" venture in Palestine, the Arabic-speaking peoples of Tunisia and Algiers are re-asserting their faith in France instead of falling through the trap of Pan-Islamic and Pan-Arab ideologies into the lap of the great defender of Islam, Hawagi Mussolini. The recent cession by Syria of the province of Alexandretta to Turkey was not followed by any protests on the part of the Pan-Arabists or their anti-imperialist defenders in radical circles.

What challenges most the sincerity of the Arab "anti-imperialists" and their allies is the scandal of the Italian domination of Libya. Since the occupation of this country by Italy in 1912, its Arab population decreased from 1,000,000 to 650,000 in 1937. During the same period the Arab population of Palestine, in spite of the "terrible brutalities" of the Zionist "invaders" has increased to 950,000. Not content with the oppression and actual starving out of the Arab natives in Libya, Italy is at present embarking upon the actual conversion of this territory into an Italian populated province. A huge tract of land, actually half the size of all the Jewish land possessions in Palestine, was recently given away to prospective Italian settlers. More land is to be handed over to them in due time. Their settlement will be conducted on a military basis. The book of instructions given to all the settlers cautions against their mingling with the Arab natives who are supposedly racially "inferior" to the Italians that have but recently been "kosherized" as blondes.

These Italian colonial ventures have been passed over silently by the Arab agitators and their radical friends abroad. No meeting of protest, no editorials, no letters to the *Nation* by Arab professors teaching at Princeton, no letters to the editors of the daily newspapers by the Shatars, Hockings and their Communist and Socialist fellow travellers on the road

of destruction of Jewish hopes. What is the reason for this silence? The radicals and friends of the Arabs are naturally either guided by political "lines" or just misinformed. The Arabs know better, but they do not tell. In the light of these facts, it can be clearly seen that the Arab "national revolt" in Palestine is nothing but the continuation of the plot for domination of the Husseini family and for the carrying out of the Berlin Axis plans in the Mediterranean. Opponents to Zionism are thus playing directly the game of "stooging" for Hitler, Mussolini, Mufti and Co., Inc., for the destruction of civilization and democracy.

Congress Seeks The Cause Of Depression

A CONGRESSIONAL committee the work of which should be followed with interest by all who feel the need for social reconstruction is that which is popularly known as the "Monopoly Committee" but which is more accurately described by its official designation as "The Temporary National Economic Committee." This committee is charged with a study of the whole problem of finding the cause and cure of recurrent economic crises. There is no more important task that could be undertaken by a legislative committee than this, and it is gratifying to see that the committee is going about its work in a serious manner and avoiding the sensational antics that so often characterize Congressional committees, the Dies Committee for example. The Economic Committee has called before it leading representatives of capitalist, labor, and consumer interests to get their ideas about what is wrong with our national economy and how it may be righted.

Among the interesting opinions that the committee has already heard is that of Isador Lubin, who proposed a relaxation of our immigration restrictions as remedying a fundamental cause of our economic depression. His argument runs as follows: "The growth of the American population, which for years acted as a spur upon production, is now slowing down and by 1960 will stop altogether. Consequently, only a constantly increasing consumption per family can bring about a general and regular increase in the output of the nation's industries."

As Jews who are troubled by the need of finding homes for our oppressed kin from other lands, we wish that Mr. Lubin's argument were valid. If the present situation were one in which all American families consumed as many goods as are needed to sustain a decent standard of living, it could be justly argued that an increase in population would contribute to a stable economy by preventing an overproduction of consumers goods. But the truth is that even the present population of America could use immeasurably more of consumers' goods, possibly enough to utilize our plant capacity to the full, if they had enough money to pay for the goods they need. But, at least, this negative implication of Lubin's argument is correct and significant—that excluding immigrants does not necessarily contribute to the prosperity of native Americans.

Nevertheless, the basic cause of economic crisis must be sought elsewhere than in the diminution of the growth of American population. This cause is clearly stated in an excerpt from a letter addressed to the New York Times by A. Brown, of Winnipeg, Canada, which is quoted in the column, Mail Bag Excerpts, in the issue of Sunday, December 11. He writes: "Capitalism suffers from a surfeit of actual capital and a deficiency of purchasing power directed toward finished goods, and it does so for the sole reason that it is capitalism. No dole system nor priming of the pump will cure this disease, which requires the active diversion of savings from excessive capital uses to demands for finished goods. The question for capitalism's peoples is thus reduced to how this diversion can successfully be brought about, in a competitive system, under peace conditions."

We believe that this is a just statement. The fact that our government has, for the first time in its history, launched an inquiry into the fundamental problem of why our present economy fails to work, and that the committee appointed for this purpose is proceeding in a serious, deliberative manner is encouraging. We are confident that its inquiry will reach important conclusions, and that, if Congress will have the vision and courage to act on them, the result will be of incalculable value to America and to the world. For the fate of civilization depends on the capacity of democratic governments to insure the efficient working of the economic order. We are unwilling to entrust our national economy to the virtual receivership of any party or personal dictatorship, whether communist or fascist. We are confident that, once we avail ourselves of the opportunity for social reconstruction which democracy affords, we shall demonstrate that democracy is not only more just and more humane than any totalitarian regime, but that it is also more efficient.

Neither Isolationism Nor Collective Security

THE debate over augmenting the armed forces of our country becomes increasingly intense. The popular magazines have even taken to illustrating the precarious position of our country by listing our painfully inadequate instruments of destruction. The radio, the press and the lecture platform are being utilized in a countrywide campaign to make Americans conscious of the danger in which we find ourselves for lack of proper defense.

Unfortunately, as in so many vital questions, only two possible positions are considered. You are either for adequate defense and rearmament, or you are against it. You are either in favor of "collective security"—e.g., preparing for the defense of the Soviet Union—or, if you are not a communist, joining up with the democracies against the fascists to make the world safe for democracy, or else you are for isolationism. The former position is presented to us by its opponents as disastrous; the latter, by its opponents, as impossible. In the meantime, the issues are perverted, because the proponents of each extreme feel the need for fortifying their arguments with additional ones, legitimate or otherwise. They are compelled to claim too much for their side.

The big army and big navy people sagely demonstrate that the process of rearming will stimulate business. Heavy industry will get a start, thus turning over the motor of prosperity. Falling into the fallacy which overwhelmed the totalitarian states, these advocates of rearmament, in their zeal for their stand, fail to reckon with the social and political implications of their program. Or—we shudder to think—perhaps they do reckon with them.

On the other hand, the isolationists force themselves into the untenable position of refusing to take sides in the world. Restraining every normal, healthy impulse to sympathize with the victims of tyranny and oppression, to punish aggression, to support the weak against the strong. The isolationists adopt the amoral attitude, seeking only to salvage, if possible, their private corner of the earth without regard for the rest. The position is morally indefensible; yet, in the heat of debate, it is defended.

Obviously we are ripe for an alternative position, and when Congress convenes shortly, this alternative should be pressed by all liberal groups and individuals. This third position requires, however, the rare and difficult skill of keeping two ideas in mind at the same time: namely, making it possible for our country to assist the victims of aggression and of treaty-breaking without involving us in actual hostilities. We must so design our neutrality legislation that we can be of assistance to the cause of international law without ourselves violating it, as it is embodied in the various peace pacts.

The outlines of this revised legislation have already begun to form. For example, the law should be modified to al-

low Congress—and not the President alone—to determine whether a state of war exists between any two nations. Further, Congress should be empowered to identify the aggressor, so that some distinction may be made in our trade relations between the aggressor and the victim. Such a course of action on our part will not be easy, but worthwhile programs have never been judged by the ease with which they can be achieved. Such an alternative foreign policy, preparing indeed for defense while making certain that we shall not be involved, must be worked out if we are to save our own democracy, and yet retain our moral responsibility to liberty lovers throughout the world.

The Organized Jewish Community and Institutional Autonomy*

By Louis Kraft**

THE fear on the part of institutions and organizations that their freedom of action would be impaired if they entered a community plan has been frequently pointed out as a deterrent to the development of the organic Jewish community. Some resist the projection of a community organization for fear of regimentation, standardization and restriction of experiment and growth. Unfortunately, experience with some types of financial federation which impose rigid budgetary control, gives support to the belief that organizations must sacrifice a large measure of autonomy in order to purchase financial security. Other institutions and services look with disfavor upon any communal machinery that might question the validity or need of their work. Over the years strongly intrenched groups, often very small, have acquired what might be regarded as vested interests in institutions and organizations through self-perpetuating boards of management. They resist to the utmost any discipline or control of a communal organization and will enter a communal plan only if complete autonomy is assured by written contract.

The question of autonomy is raised also by organizations that have property or capital funds which they wish to protect and control. Federation executives will cite numerous instances of the difficulties they encounter in trying to effect mergers of agencies that duplicate each other's work because such mergers involve abandonment of buildings or the transfer of capital funds.

Local branches or units of national organizations often place loyalty to the national organization above responsibility to the local community and are slow to adapt their programs to local needs or to affiliate in a local plan for fear that they may be confronted with a problem of trying to serve conflicting interests. Another factor is undoubtedly the affiliation of a large number of Jewish agencies with non-sectarian Community Chests. Indeed with but few exceptions, organized Jewish philanthropies of a local character derive their funds entirely from such sources. This makes them independent to some extent of Jewish community control or at least makes such control secondary to that of the community chest. Some feel that they must be free to participate in the general community program which they fear might be interfered with by affiliation in a purely Jewish communal plan. This desire for so-called autonomy has given rise to the dichotomy in Jewish life whereby one Jewish community organization deals with one set of Jewish services that are supported by the non-secretarian Community Chest and another

*Paper read at Reconstructionist Summer Institute, September 4, 1938.

**Acting Executive Director Jewish Welfare Board.

Jewish communal body deals with a separate set of Jewish services disqualified for such support although both organizations deal with the same Jewish population.

Then there is the widespread resistance to the suggestion of an all-inclusive community organization that arises from the fear that a sort of ghetto will be created, a tight compartment in which Jewish life will be made to function separate and apart from general life.

Many of the fears of organizations that their autonomy will be restricted if they share in a community plan are groundless, but so strongly ingrained is this fear that almost every constitution of a Federation, Chest, Community Council or Welfare Fund, begins with an assurance that the freedom of action of constituent organizations is fully guaranteed.

Since any plan of community organization under our American system must be essentially voluntary, it is almost axiomatic that administrative autonomy in large measure is guaranteed to participating organizations. But the need to protect autonomy should not preclude cooperation, collaboration and joint action. Altogether too frequently local community councils, in their desire to safeguard autonomy of their constituents, avoid zealously any action on which there might be lack of unanimity, the result being that no positive program is carried forward. Community organization in such instances does not go beyond the area of discussion. The general effect of emphasis on institutional autonomy in many instances is to perpetuate the status quo and in fact to resist any attempt to retrieve past errors, to plan for the future, and to bring order into communal life.

The fact is that there are many opportunities for cooperation in the interest of the general communal welfare which do not interfere with the essential freedom of local organizations. The movement for community organization in the more modern sense, i.e., in terms of a philosophy of group survival and of a program embracing the totality of Jewish needs, is relatively new. It is taking on a variety of forms and patterns, depending as it should, on local situations. Yet despite the variety and despite the fact that mere beginnings have been made, there are discernible trends and the outlines of a program which indicate most hopefully the possibilities of cooperation, co-ordination and planning for general communal growth in which many organizations may share without loss of freedom.

The description of activities which follow are in few instances already in practice. Others are embodied in the constitutions and plans of community organizations and still others have not been incorporated in any existing program but have been offered as possible courses of procedure.

The outstanding and most effective cooperative activities have been in the field of fund-raising for local, national and international activities. Co-operative fund-raising for local purposes has never had any extended development. A relatively small number of Jewish communities have had Federations of Jewish Charities, on the pattern of the New York Federation, and these Federations were established primarily in the larger centers of Jewish population. Undoubtedly the rise of the non-sectarian Community Chest which freely admitted individual Jewish institutions and agencies had much to do with halting the growth of the financial type of Jewish Federation. On the other hand Community Chests have had a salutary effect on Jewish community organization. For, being relieved of the need for fund-raising for local purposes, Jewish Federations could and did devote themselves more directly to the problems of co-ordination of Jewish programs of social service and became more functional in character.

Furthermore, Jewish communities were left free to organize more effectively for fund-raising for national causes, for overseas work, and for Palestine. More and more these needs have been met in one annual campaign, through organizations of

the type of the Jewish Welfare Fund or United Jewish Appeal. Indeed so effectively has the principle of united fund raising been established in the Jewish community that it is becoming increasingly difficult for local or national organizations to continue to raise funds independently. Of course, when an organization joins a Welfare Fund or Federation it gives up its right to raise funds publicly. To that extent it sacrifices autonomy. However, the benefits of central fund raising and the financial security which it guarantees to constituent societies so far outweigh the limited value of allowing each organization to campaign independently that no one seriously regards the restriction imposed upon the freedom of individual organizations to solicit support as a real impairment of their autonomy.

The problem affecting the Welfare Fund is a different one, which may be beyond the scope of this paper. It is rather a question of relating the Welfare Fund program to changing needs of Jewish life and giving communities a voice in determining Welfare Fund policies. The unsound features of the Welfare Fund in many communities are that it is separated from any plan of community organization, that its policies are determined by a small group and that it is often simply an annual fund raising effort and, like the financial Federation, rapidly congeals into a fixed pattern with a purely mechanical system of distribution of receipts. Indeed very often the Welfare Fund is in the control of the local Federation and is governed by the same limited policy.

On the other hand, there are indications of a growing appreciation of the relationship of fund raising to community planning and a recognition of the need for democratizing the policy governing the Welfare Fund. Also there is increasing understanding of the principle that fund-raising is not an end in itself and that the Welfare Fund, the Federation and the Community Council are three related elements of a larger community plan. Thus in Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Louisville, Houston and some other cities, the Welfare Fund is controlled more or less by the Community Council. In Cincinnati, the Council controls and supervises the Fund. Therefore, even though local constituents no longer have the right to raise funds independently, they have the assurance that a democratic body to which they have access, governs the distribution of funds and that, in so far as possible, such distribution is equitable.

Another area in which there has been substantial cooperation is in the field of community action. For reasons which are well known to this audience, there has been manifested a great willingness on the part of Jewish organizations and individuals to unite in dealing with programs of defense against anti-Semitism, in creating representative bodies to speak for local communities on matters involving the welfare of Jews, and in providing for machinery for discussion and democratic action on the larger issues affecting Jewish life. There has been little question here of preserving institutional autonomy in order to have the security that comes from joining with others in a community organization. Perhaps the most encouraging evidence of this willingness to give up some freedom of action for the sake of the common good has been the recent decision of the four major national organizations—The American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith and Jewish Labor Committee to join forces in common defensive measures on behalf of American Jewry. A few years ago we had another illustration of the possibilities and values of such united action on a national scale when, on the initiative of the Jewish Welfare Board, that organization invited the American Jewish Committee, the Congress, and B'nai B'rith to join in the campaign to prevent an American team from participating in the Olympic games in Germany and failed only by the close margin of a few votes out of several hundred in achieving that goal.

Locally the problem of unified action

has been dealt with in most instances through Jewish Community Councils. These councils do not all follow the same organizational structure. In general their purpose is to provide some more or less democratic machinery for dealing with problems of general concern to the Jewish community that are not dealt with otherwise by some local agency. What effect the new program of the four national bodies will have on local community councils particularly in defensive programs remains to be seen. Undoubtedly there will be a new local orientation with respect to the areas of defense and protection of Jewish life, once the national program filters down to the local community and it is quite possible that local community councils will either cease to have any distinctive significance or be compelled to concern themselves more directly with the institutional life of the community and with the normal functions of institutions and agencies.

That there is a great field for constructive organization in developing an integrated communal program cannot be questioned. Organizations and institutions have been established in large numbers for the most part to meet an immediate need and have persisted long after the need has been met or has disappeared. On the other hand there are many gaps in our scheme of institutional life, many unmet needs. More and more we are forced to the realization that better planning, better use of our resources of facilities, personnel and funds, is needed if we are to create a dynamic, progressive community life. In the face of the common enemy, we are becoming impatient with unimportant differences that prevent unity or defeat desirable co-ordination. In the face of a growing demand for aid to our stricken brethren in Europe and Palestine, there will be a more pronounced shrinkage in sums available for local work and institutions will be increasingly tested on the basis of their continuing value to American Jewish life. There is a great danger that worthwhile organizations, lacking in influential support will suffer when funds for local work shrink because of the demands for foreign relief.

It is imperative therefore that Jewish communities make the most effective use of their resources and strengthen particularly those institutions and services which are essential to positive Jewish living—Jewish education, the Synagogue, the Jewish Center and other cultural forces. Among these agencies there are and should be many differences. We must understand and respect those differences. But they should not keep us apart. Rather should we seek opportunities for cooperation and co-ordination that do not affect basic principles of philosophy or program. What are some of the activities that will lead to a more efficient, a more rounded scheme of Jewish communal life?

I shall not undertake to deal with those areas of communal activity that fall in the category of Jewish social service or philanthropy. I do not feel competent to speak from first hand experience with developments in these fields. I am more or less familiar and certainly concerned with my own field, the Jewish Center and with the closely related Jewish educational activities for children, young people and adults. I am frank to say that while there has been some co-ordination, planning and unified program developed by the Center, particularly in small communities, little progress can be recorded elsewhere in bringing about a program that deals effectively with the totality of Jewish needs in Jewish education, cultural and social life. There are, however, many practical possibilities, conditioned of course on an acceptance of the thesis of the organic Jewish community and upon the willingness of organizations to cooperate in achieving it.

In a scheme that embraces the totality of the program, we seek to coordinate objectives and efforts wherever possible and to fill gaps in the program that are unmet or cannot be met effectively by any single agency. For example in the field of Jewish education, no single agency can effectively train Hebrew teachers or Sunday school teachers, but together a train-

ing program can be provided and appropriate placements made. Under a coordinated plan several small schools can join in conducting post-confirmation or high school classes. Class room materials can be exchanged and there can be exchange of experience resulting from meetings and conferences of teachers of all of the schools. Joint celebrations of holidays and an exchange of programs can be undertaken. The promotion of registration of children can well be conducted on a city-wide basis, with all of the values of publicity and stimulation of parents and children and the public generally that comes from a well planned and all embracing enrollment effort.

Improved housing for Talmud Torahs can frequently be arranged in a Community Center or by joint action of synagogues and other institutions. There are many instances of such provision in connection with the construction of a new Center building, where the Center management has itself been mindful of the need as a community need or has been made aware of it by community minded individuals interest in Jewish education and sufficiently well organized to influence action. Similarly, facilities of Talmud Torahs and synagogues can be made available to a greater degree as meeting places for clubs and other groups and for organized recreational and cultural activities, if these institutions are part of a community organization. There are values to be gained by such collaboration in addition to the greater use of physical facilities. Possibilities of integration of Jewish educational and recreational programs, of enriching formal Jewish instruction, and making it more attractive to the child, of awakening lay interest among people in the neighborhood, of increased financial support—all of these values may result from real cooperation in rounding out the services of the institution.

Community planning for Jewish education and recreation is becoming increasingly important in the larger cities where shifts of Jewish population have been so rapid that relatively new synagogue and school buildings have had to be abandoned, but where the new neighborhoods have not been sufficiently well organized or have not the resources to provide new facilities. Unless there is a central agency, community wide in character, and influence, such new areas are frequently neglected or inadequately provided with the essential educational and recreational activities.

This situation, so common in our urban communities, also calls for some cooperative plan or community study of institutional activity and of changes in Jewish population on the basis of which plans for orderly reduction or abandonment of activities may be undertaken in sections losing Jewish population and a corresponding development of new activities undertaken in the areas to which Jews are moving. Individual organizations that have investments in facilities are loathe to give them up even in the face of declining need, and it requires pressure from a community minded body to compel a change which can often be effected without loss of the service and personnel of the organization.

As one travels about the country, particularly in the small and intermediate communities, he gains the impression of a great desire, almost a hunger for authoritative Jewish information. Removed as these people are from sources of current knowledge of what is transpiring in the world of Jewish affairs, they seek knowledge eagerly. To a lesser degree this is true also in our larger cities. People want to read and they want to hear from persons who can speak with authority. Singly the institutions and organizations in the community haven't the financial resources to meet this need. Together they can cooperate in organizing a lecture series, forum, or institute bringing to the community people who can inform them of and interpret for them the problems that confront Jewry and can offer them encouragement and understanding. Together the local agencies can create a Jewish library of books and periodicals, and can them-

selves issue a local magazine or news letter disseminating Jewish information.

There is perhaps no area of Jewish communal life in which coordination and unity of effort are more needed than in activities on behalf of youth. I need not dwell on the economic and social problems confronting Jewish young people. Add to them the disheartening picture of the elders divided among themselves in many ways—some of them traceable to Old World traditions and prejudices—in ways that to the American born boy and girl are entirely without meaning and that often have the effect of alienating them from Jewish life. Disillusioned by an antagonistic world, they often seek in vain the sense of security that could be afforded to them by being welcomed and finding a place of usefulness in the life of the Jewish community. Instead they find disorganization, rivalry and disunity —certainly not conducive to sustaining of an already shaken morale.

The problem is too great for any one agency to cope with. Jewish Centers can provide for some of the needs of young people but not for all. The economic problems of young men and young women in so far as they arise from the fact of their Jewishness are the responsibility of the Jewish community as a whole, perhaps of the national Jewish community. Some efforts have been made in vocational guidance and employment placement. More intensive work involving training may be required. In any event, wherever the problem exists, cooperation of all agencies concerned and of individual Jews in position to help could result in setting up some services of a vocational nature to deal with the problem.

As part of a unified community plan, Jewish youth organizations affiliated with various institutions should be encouraged to form city-wide groups for cooperative undertakings. Differences and organizational loyalties should not prevent collaboration. On the contrary young people particularly need experience in joint endeavor if they are to work in unity as elders. For like many other social enterprises, community organization is not a mechanical pattern imposed upon a group of individuals. It must be experienced and lived. Youth can be conditioned for participation in a democratic, organic Jewish society by being given opportunities for collaboration in activity. There is no more important function of a Jewish community organization and no more urgent obligation on the part of adult organizations than to stimulate youth to share, on its own level and in its own sphere of interest, with other youths, no matter what primary affiliation they may have with their parent organizations. Efforts made in these directions have resulted in the establishment of Jewish Youth Councils or other city-wide groups, largely self-governing and self-directing which give promise of constructive results.

As a corollary of the plan for uniting efforts in behalf of youth, much value results from cooperation in the preparation of program material, in conferences of professional workers, and in training programs for leaders of groups. Very often a single Jewish agency cannot of itself conduct proper recruiting and training procedures to prepare people for the important tasks of leadership of clubs and other groups of children and young people. By acting together, however, well planned training programs can be organized. Since synagogues, schools centers, junior groups of Hadassah, Young Judaea, and the Council of Jewish Women, depend increasingly for the success of their work with young people upon qualified leaders, the problem of training is one of general communal interest and concern. In these groups are the leaders of tomorrow and the character of the leadership they will exercise depends very largely upon the kind of direction, stimulation and Jewish interest they acquire in the informal group activities in which they participate as children. The cultivation of potential Jewish leadership is a responsibility of the entire community to be achieved only by intelligent and wholehearted cooperation.

Once leadership is trained and developed there is the further obligation to give it an opportunity to exercise power. Basically this implies a democratic form of communal organization in which ability and willingness to serve and not financial power or social influence control the avenues by which leadership may function and progress. A certain amount of direction is also needed so that leadership may be distributed where it is best suited to serve. It is characteristic of our present system or lack thereof that such leaders as are effective gravitate to or are selected by a few organizations while other valuable organizations and movements remain lacking in leadership. I realize that the problem is complicated by many factors, not the least of which is the willingness of organizations to accept leadership of particular individuals. But all of you who have had experience in communal work know how often the burden of leadership falls upon a few overworked individuals or how difficult it is to find room for very able people in positions pre-empted by others who no longer render constructive service. The problem is two-fold—selecting and training individuals for leadership and finding places for them to exercise it. If any progress is to be made in this direction it can only come through the channels created by a community-wide organization with a broad community point of view uninfluenced by questions of prestige or narrow organizational loyalty. Conditions are more favorable today for such a program than in the past. Many of our local institutions receive their chief support from central fund-raising organizations and campaigns. Money is given in an impersonal, indirect way and institutions do not have to depend so much on the affluent Board member. They can more readily select people for their ability, talent, interest and understanding. The task is important particularly as in each community there is increasing evidence of the falling off of the old type of outstanding personal leadership. The task of direction must be spread over more individuals and much of the leadership must be exercised collectively through democratic processes set in motion by a democratically conceived community organization.

The few illustrations of possibilities and needs of cooperative action are merely indicative of the large task that confronts us when we think in terms of an ordered, all-inclusive community plan. If it is democratic in structure and community-wide in scope, there will be no question of infringement upon autonomy of local organizations. All activities will be directed toward the common good. Of course, some organizations will be compelled to change their work, others will be merged with like organizations and some may have to abandon outmoded functions. New enterprises will have to meet the test of need before they are launched. This will happen in a community organization that is not founded upon the preservation of the status quo but is organic and dynamic. We live in a world of change and our institutional and organizational life must be adapted to change.

In the face of a shrinking Jewish world, of the annihilation of Jewish wealth and power in one country after another and the consequent shifting of a greater burden upon the Jews of this country, we cannot afford the luxury of outmoded and non-productive institutions and services. Whatever we do communally must be helpful in the preservation and upbuilding of the Jewish group and of Jewish life. Understanding of the needs of Jewish life, intelligent planning to meet the needs, wide participation in the communal program and sharing by the greatest number in the machinery of communal functioning, these are the essentials of sound community organization. Organization on this basis can be achieved, though the process may be painfully show. If we but have the will to undertake it and the desire to work in cooperation for the common good, we can so order Jewish life as to preserve its integrity and make it a haven of security, happiness and self-realization to coming generations of Jews.

Is United Jewish Action Possible?*

By BERNARD G. RICHARDS

THE subject which has been assigned to me consists of the following question. "What are the possibilities of common action despite different conceptions of the nature of the Jewish Group?"

To put the matter in simpler form, we are asked whether *different section of American Jewry, holding diverse or opposing points of view, can unite and work together for the protection of the rights of Jews, which may be threatened or invaded, and for the furtherance of their general interests as members of a separate community.*

I answer that such concerted and coordinated action is both practical and desirable, and I venture to state that *certain pressing, immediate needs must take precedence ofter far-off idealistic ends.* Considering the special circumstances which now surround the Jewish people, it may even be said that the realization of some of our ideals may recede to an ever greater distance if we do not take immediate steps to ward off dangers that confront us and to perform the urgent tasks of the hour.

First of all it seems advisable to emphasize the *distinction between unity of thought and unity of action,* and I can do no better then to invoke the dictum of one of the first and most thoughtful of the leaders of the original movement for the American Jewish Congress. He said over and over again that unity of thought was neither possible nor desirable—that uniformity of opinion would tend to stagnate the intellectual life of the community but that on the other hand unity of action on the basis of a limited program was both possible and desirable.

We are bound to recognize that all social and political strivings even among established peoples can only aim at or content themselves with an approximation to their underlying philosophies and ideologies. *His formula of unity of action was accordingly based on the wise assumption that for the purpose of immediate and practical action, certain understandings can be reached requiring acquiesence only in regard to the concrete tasks,* while principles and theories are held in abeyance, each group remaining free to entertain or even to advocate its own point of view.

It was in this spirit of accentuating points of agreement and of temporarily suspending the dictates of ideology that the original Congress agreement of 1917 was reached. After the long and heated controversy which was extended over two years between those who favored a free and open congress popularly elected and those who proposed a limited and restricted conference, the two opposing groups of organizations came together and an understanding was reached which laid the foundation of common action in the following terms:

"By virtue of the authority vested in us as the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Congress, the Jews of America are earnestly requested to select representatives to an American Jewish Congress which shall meet at . . . . . exclusively for the purpose of defining methods whereby, in cooperation with the Jews of the world, full rights may be secured for the Jews of all lands, and all laws discriminating against them may be abrogated. It being understood that the phrase 'full rights' is deemed to include:

"1) Civil, religious, and political rights, and in addition thereto

"2) Wherever the various peoples of any land are or may be recognized as having rights as such, the conferring upon the Jewish people of the land affected, of

*Address delivered before Reconstructionist Summer Institute at Camp Cejwin, Port Jervis, New York, on September 4, 1938.

like rights, if desired by them, as determined and ascertained by the Congress.

"3) The securing and protection of Jewish rights in Palestine.

"No resolution shall be introduced, considered or acted upon at the Congress, which shall in any way purport or tend to commit the Congress as a body, or any of its delegates or any of the communities or organizations which shall be represented therein to the adoption, recognition or endorsement of any general theory or philosophy of Jewish life, or any theoretical principle of a racial, political, economic or religious character, or which shall involve the perpetuation of such Congress.

"The calling and holding of the Congress shall in no manner affect the autonomy of any existing American Jewish organizations, but in so far as the Executive Committee selected by such Congress shall take action for the securing of Jewish rights as defined in the Call for such Congress, the activities of such Executive Committee shall, during the period of its existence be regarded as having precedence over those of any other organizations which shall participate in such Congress.

The verdict of the time has, I believe, been fully vindicated by the judgment of history, and all those who have followed this chapter of Jewish events, whether as participants or as observers and students, will acknowledge that the agreement which led to the holding of the first American Jewish Congress in 1918, leading to the work accomplished at the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919, was fully justified by the achievements gained both for the cause of Jewish rights in Eastern Europe and for the cause of a Jewish Palestine.

This agreement called for only a temporary war-time Congress, and when, after the adjournment of the first Congress in September, 1920, the assembled delegates remained in the hall of the Philadelphia hotel to form then and there a provisional committee for the establishment of a permanent Congress, the question of a breach of faith was raised in certain quarters. But that charge was answered by the statement that under the changed conditions the original Congressists who, from the beginning favored a permanent body, again felt free to pull down from the clouds the suspended ideology and once more endeavor to put it into operation. This incident has long ago been left behind and perhaps even forgotten by the principals of the early dispute.

But it may be useful to recall here the fact that after the temporary amity that lasted for nearly three years (1917-1920), we again had outbreaks and discord. If the burning question of minority rights had already been dissolved in the final proposals to the Peace Conference and their embodiment in the Peace Treaties, the differences of opinion centering around the Jewish National Homeland in Palestine had not been composed, although there had been an understanding as to the demands placed before the Peace Conference on the subject of Palestine.

Some of the anti-Zionists withdrew from the early conciliatory position, and of course the Zionists, having to carry the burden of the movement, resumed a certain agressive attitude which had been somewhat subdued out of deference to the unity agreement. The controversy of Zionism versus Anti-Zionism, therefore, continued to manifest itself in different forms until a new peace formula was reached in connection with the establishment of the Jewish Agency in 1929.

To add to the contradictions or paradoxes of Jewish life, the Zionist leadership, which in 1916-19 fought for Jewish nationalism and for democracy in Jewry, later, at the time of the Cleveland convention of 1921, took a position which, in the first place, was in a sense antinationalist and, in the second place, contradicted their advocacy of democracy as applied to Jewish affairs. The general effect of this division in Zionism was to give encouragement to the antis or assimilationists and also to create the impression, augmented by other incidents, that ideologies

are not always employed to advance definite ideals, but are often used as weapons of intellectual combat, involving personal antagonisms as well as difference of opinion.

After several years of devoted and arduous labors of the late Louis Marshall and of Dr. Chaim Weitzmann, beginning with the New York Conference of 1925 and 1928 and culminating in the Zurich Assembly of 1929, another notable peace agreement was reached. This I believe marked a further important stage in the development of unified action on the part of the diverse elements of American Jewry.

The press agents who try to fill the void which is left in our life by the absence of poetry called the agreement "a pact of glory," and perhaps we have with our usual optimism expected too much for the advancement of the Palestinian ideal from this understanding. But after glancing backward and noting all the obstacles that stood in our path, we may conclude that both Palestnie and the cause of Jewish unity gained considerably from the establishment of the Jewish Agency.

The year 1929, which saw the foundation of the Jewish Agency, also witnessed another advance in the direction of unified Jewish action. Without the leaders of the American Jewish Congress or the American Jewish Committee wanting it or even seriously thinking about it, some delegates who attended the Congress session of that year in Atlantic City carried through a proposal calling for cooperation among several central groups dealing with general Jewish interests. The Joint Consultation Committee which was then set up fell to pieces as often as it was reconstituted, but an idea of unified action was thrown into the community which grew and acquired new force.

With the gradual diminution of differences as to national or minority rights and as to Jewish restoration in Palestine, with the decline, for instance of the idea of Galuth Nationalism as an intellectual factor in Jewish life, the weakening of the conflict between the Orthodox and Reform elements of our people, and the elimination of their points of friction, the various Jewish groups came even closer together.

The establishment in different cities of the country of Federations, Welfare Funds and Community Councils embracing all sections of our people, the inauguration of the joint drives and campaigns even by the Zionists and non-Zionist workers for the large relief funds, served to further the fusion and the communal integration of different sections of Jewry. There were, indeed, periods of such peacefulness and at least apparent harmony that if it were not for certain dominant and aggressive personalities, we might have forgotten the differences of opinion ,all the more readily since such large numbers of our people still do not understand the differences between the various groups. Now and then disputes were revived by emergencies facing the Jews in different countries such as the Jewish colonization activities in Soviet Russia, which were being carried on most vigorously when Judaism was being demolished in that land. But whatever fires of antagonism still smouldered, the catastrophe which overwhelmed the Jews of Germany in 1933 was bound to stir us out of our ruts and lift us above our petty communal partisanship and claims. Yet we did not, for all our vaunted devotion and benevolent emotions, respond as readily as we might have done, and the gulf that is created by different brands of inertia and by old habits of thought held us apart for an inexcusable length of time during which we experimented with different methods running to the extremes of hush and holler.

Finally, during a curious and noisy agitation called either plebiscite or election, which was as futile as it was ill-advised—since it was not intended merely to choose delegates, but to register a point of view, with inevitable result of demonstrating a division of Jewish life—finally, during this agitation, a number of Jewish organizations of Pittsburgh, Pa., and some twenty other cities demanded that there be a cessation of dispute and

recrimination, and that a plan of cooperation between the various central groups be worked out and adopted. The decision reached at the Pittsburgh Conference is as follows:

"We, representatives of the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai B'rith and the Jewish Labor Committee, gathered together in Pittsburgh June 13, 1938, upon the invitation of Pittsburgh Jewry, endorsed by the Jewry of many other American cities, propose to these organizations the immediate coordination of those activities of the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai B'rith and the Jewish Labor Committee which relate specifically to safeguarding equal rights of Jews, through the creation of a snigle body in which each of these respective organizations shall have equal representation, but without affecting the autonomy of any of those organizations and excluding the consideration of questions involving racial, national or religious philosophies."

It is significant that the very important action, which was initiated by Edgar J. Kaufman of Pittsburgh, had its origin and development outside of the dominant or dominated groups of New York and other large cities. Perhaps this marked a beginning of some self-assertion on part of the erstwhile docile country cousin. It is also a commentary on the quality of Jewish leadership that nothing is done to make concessions to public opinion and give stronger direction to the conduct of our affairs until we are threatened with unseemly and hurtful conflict and competition.

In 1938 as in 1917, the leaders did not listen until it became necessary to deal with formidable opposition. But the Pittsburgh agreement reached on June 13th marks an important advance in the unification of the American Jewish Community. The new General Council for Jewish Rights meets to organize on September 21, and we can at this time only express the hope that it will respond to the urgent need of the time and become the means of vigorous action in defense of our harassed and anguished people. Will this new Council succeed? Not without the assertion of a more vigorous Jewish press; not without a better understanding on part of larger numbers of our people of the actual needs confronting us and of the corresponding action that is required.

For one thing, we do not have ample resources of information and do not all know the same things, and you cannot without larger knowledge or a greater understanding have unity in the community. For another thing, the new organization cannot become a positive force without stronger interest and more positive opinion to stir and stimulate its progress. Much will also depend upon the type of additional organizations that will be included in the General Council, but the progress of the new body as a whole will chiefly be subject to the manifestation of a more active and determined Jewish public opinion.

Of course, everybody wants unity but only small numbers of our people understand the issues that are involved. Hence we need more knowledge and more understanding. Let us hope for a new and more enlightened era in Jewish life.